

E-Government Service Certification Guidelines

Following are the certification guidelines for State of Montana e-Government services. Language referring to these guidelines is to be included in all work orders and contracts for e-Government services unless an exception to the *E-Government Service Certification* standard has been granted. The Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) will use these guidelines (and all other applicable state standards) when considering certification. Certification provides the agency with the appropriate and applicable benefits listed below (please note, some of the benefits may require a work order or agreement with the state's e-Government services provider).

Benefits of certification:

- Appropriate visibility on DiscoveringMontana.com
- Use of the e-Government infrastructure (requires a work order, see [Appendix A](#))
 - Application hosting
 - Security
 - Login verification (DiscoveringMontana.com Registered Service)
 - Payment portal (electronic submission of money)
 - Credit cards
 - Debit cards
 - Electronic checks (electronic funds transfer)
 - E-Government services help desk assistance (first line of support)
- Marketing assistance when applicable (development of brochures, publications, press releases, radio actualities, scripts for public service announcements, etc.)
- Inclusion in promotional events for DiscoveringMontana.com (trade shows, conferences, industry association events, fairs, etc.)

Guideline applicability:

- **Definition of an e-Government Service (and what these guidelines apply to):** An e-Government service is an application, or series of applications, on the Internet that provides a specific service to a citizen or business. The application(s) are interactive and/or transactional-based in nature, meaning that information is collected or provided by the customer and service is then delivered (a transaction is completed). Examples are: web enabling business systems and allowing customers to enter in their own search criteria and then receiving the information they seek from those systems; filling out a tax form online (where they are able to submit it online) and paying their taxes; purchasing goods and paying for them from the shopping cart; renewing and paying for permits, licenses, or fees; any service using the payment portal. The goal of an e-Government service is to provide a complete end-to-end solution to the customer whenever possible, meaning the customer has provided all necessary information and payment has been collected and the State has delivered the service including all necessary information and documentation to the customer. When implemented in this fashion, both the State and the customer should gain efficiencies.

- **What these guidelines DO NOT apply to:** Static or informational web pages, .pdf's, or documents; downloadable documents or forms (including forms the customer must send in or e-mail); search engines or functions providing searches on static web pages or documents; systems used primarily for the purpose of finding web content or documents published on the web; intranet services or applications; simple one page forms submitted online requesting information, submitting a complaint, or similar function; prepackaged or off-the-shelf software that is not customizable

Elements common to all services or applications:

- Each page is designed and limited to an 800 x 600 pixel display whenever possible (no scrolling either vertically or horizontally)
- The service should not require the client or customer to download anything to use the service (i.e. special software or.dll's); products such as Internet viewers and Adobe Acrobat are acceptable as they are standard practice
- The pages are kept as "clutter-free" (leaving sufficient white space) as possible
- The service is accomplished in as few steps as possible for efficiency
- Footer must be one of the approved Discovering Montana footers (reference <http://templates.discoveringmontana.com>)
 - All initial pages must have a footer, the footer is optional on subsequent pages
 - Footers should be no more than one line
 - Footer links in order from left to right:
 - Online Services
 - Department homepage
 - Division homepage or other agency preference (if desired)
 - Contact Us (Discovering Montana or agency help desk)
- Link to the "Privacy & Security Policy" and "Accessibility" centered in a small font below the footer separated with a vertical bar (the links are: <http://www.discoveringmontana.com/itsd/policy/policies/ENTINT030.asp> and <http://www.discoveringmontana.com/css/disclaimer1.asp#accessibility>)
- Title tags on all pages
 - Title tag should list the service name first, followed by the agency, separated by a hyphen (i.e., Voter File Online – Montana Secretary of State)
- Be consistent with fonts, use a style sheet
 - Common sans serif fonts include: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica
- Page backgrounds will all be white
- Compliant with Section 508 and 18-5-601 – 18-5-605, MCA
 - Descriptive alt tags on every graphic
 - Refer to ITSD's Accessibility Guidelines on MINE
- If collecting payment electronically, the State's existing payment portal must be used

Assistance Buttons:

- Consistent location – top right corner below the banner
- Buttons should follow this order:
 - Instructions (left)
 - Fees (center #1)
 - How Do I? (center #2)
 - Search Tips (center #3)
 - Feedback (right)
 - Navigation at the bottom of the assistance pages should include a “Back” button which will take the user back to where they were prior to accessing the button, or “Service Home” which will take the user back to the home page of the service

Other:

- Consistent wording on buttons
 - Home page: Start, Submit, Continue, Login, Find
 - Interior pages: Search again, Update, Reset, Back, Print, and those for the home page
- The continue button for navigation should be on the left and Reset on the right (follow standard Windows conventions)
- Naming convention for URL – abbreviation associated primarily with service, not organization or agency (e.g. <http://app.discoveringmontana.com/bes/>)
- Naming convention for service
 - Select a name that will make sense to the customer and has meaning on its own independent of the agency (the customer should not have to know the organizational structure of government and what agency provides what services to find what they are looking for)
 - Do not use “throw away” words such as Internet and Montana the customer already knows they are on Montana’s Internet website
 - Use “service” not “application”; one “service” can be made up of many “applications”; the customer knows they need a service from state government, “application” often has no meaning and may be confusing for non-technical people
- Contact Us must include contact information including address, telephone number, and e-mail address (2-17-552, MCA)
- Services should open in a new browser window when the link is activated where appropriate
- A demo should be created for each service (when it lends value to the customer) and the “Try the Demo” icon placed in the bottom right corner above the footer of the service as well as at the top of the instructions page; the demo needs to contain navigation that easily gets the customer back to the real service

Appendix A

Application Development and Hosting

In the guidelines under “Benefits of certification” it references this appendix under “Use of the e-Government infrastructure”. The State of Montana’s e-Government infrastructure (hardware, software, security, payment portal, etc.) has been established through the Electronic Government Services contract. The contract establishes a work order process used to take advantage of these services. In most instances, these services are available at no cost to the agency as funding is established through customer convenience fees.

Below is the information and guidelines agencies must follow in order to take advantage of the e-Government infrastructure. Agencies may use the application hosting environment, security (including login security), and the payment portal by following and developing for these guidelines and establishing an approved e-Government Services contract work order.

Please note: These services are for application hosting only, not database hosting. This appendix will be updated as the environment changes.

Software Development Environment:

- Perl 5.8.0 (or higher as available at www.perl.com)
- CGI 2.81 (or higher as available at cpan)
- Apache 1.3.28 (or higher as available at www.apache.org)
- PHP 4.3.2 (or higher as available at www.php.net)
- JBoss with embedded Tomcat

Backup:

- Backup is provided by ITSD

Development Guidelines:

- Application should not:
 - Use excessive CPU (see efficiency standards below)
 - Exceed 10MB in size (total disk usage)
 - Require any security holes opened (i.e. telnet, r*)
 - Require any unusual ports to be opened
 - Require maintenance on the part of support personnel (log rotation okay)
 - Require root access by the agency
- Application should:
 - Run as a non-privileged user (agency must be responsible for taking rotated logs off server)
 - Use known secure applications (i.e. ssh, scp)

- Detailed documentation on the application must be given to Discovering Montana before hosting begins and updated over the life of the application.

Efficiency Standards:

- Applications hosted on the DiscoveringMontana.com production server will be subject to continuous performance monitoring by Discovering Montana. Disk usage, CPU, memory, swap rate and other parameters will be tracked to make sure that the application is performing efficiently.
- Discovering Montana reserves the right to disable any application that is causing problems that jeopardize other applications on the server, or the integrity of the server.